North Carolinians Speak Up Against Offenses

***The history of a brutal process and a unique story about an unlawful, life changing and heart-wrenching act of carelessness***

T

he amount of states that allowed, and still allows this dreadful procedure to be done is surprising to most. Although sterilization during the popular ages of eugenics seems nothing short of evil, believe it or not, it was originally created to better the human race. The history of this barbaric process is extremely crucial to understand its initial purpose.

The idea of eugenics was born in an unstable and dark time in America. The majority of the rich population believed that alcoholism, promiscuity, poverty, rebelliousness, prostitution and “feeble mindedness” were all genetic traits that could be terminated. The environment that eugenics

was born in is extremely important to its purpose. After the civil war, there were many economic and social problems. The

growth of the American industry and the minimized

human labor on farms caused people to move into the cities, whose population was much larger than the housing occupancy. The amount of European immigrants also made matters worse leading up to World War 1. Price increases bankrupted many businesses and started a domino effect depression throughout the economy starting in 1873 and escalating towards the 1900’s. People used Social Darwinism to describe the economy; survival of the fittest. The working class’ birthrate was out numbering the wealthy and the government was doing little to help the poverty rate, and eugenics didn’t take off until after World War II, due to crises in funds due to a deprived economy.

This explains the social inequalities since the wealthy are enhanced individuals and therefore

are better suited to survive in the uncertain economy

at the time. As a nation, experts turned to scientific means of controlling the population, known as

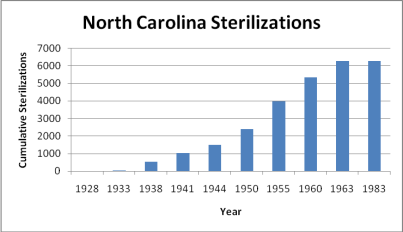
progressivism. It then then turned into a newly reformed method of genetics, and turned into a way of social engineering, known as eugenics. The method that eugenicists used was brutally overvalued. They didn’t have any documentation that genetics were tied to any of the traits they studied to prove the poor should be eliminated. It’s exclusively ironic that scientists made such clear relationships between genes and behaviors at a time when they did not even know that DNA carried actual genes, prompting the researchers to treat complex behavior as though it had a single cause. Other flaws in research included that the researchers did not take into account the impact that the environment plays into a person’s phenotype. They also used ethnically based IQ tests on all the immigrants to determine their IQ. Since the scientist’s results were made up, the false information was interpreted as scientific knowledge.

Nearly everyone in the world believes that Hitler was the genocidal mass murderer that brutally killed and tortured innocent people due to the way they looked. Surprisingly, Hitler got this idea from the land of the free and is known as the greatest and most prestigious country in the world, the United States of America. How could such a prestigious, abundant and democratic land of opportunity chaperone such a ghastly event? In Hitler’s famous book, “Mein Kampf,” he tells of America’s eugenics and how he and his Nazi followers are going to thoroughly shadow America’s lead on eugenic regulation.

**“I have studied with great interest the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, in all probability, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock.”**

Shockingly, America welcomed Hitler with open arms when he asked to work on eugenic research together. In 1977, it actually became some sort of game, when the superintendent of Virginias Western State Hospital, Joseph DeJarnette, exclaimed that “Germany is beating us at our own game.”

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

****The most popular state to first pass a eugenics law was North Carolina. It was and still continues to be a very debated and emotional topic to both victims and the North Carolina government, trying to find a way to possibly re-pay hurt victims for their loss and frustration of injustices that hovered over them throughout their lives. The first law was passed in 1919, but to experts knowledge, it was not utilized. But then in 1929, The North Carolina General Assembly passed a sterilization law declaring, *“The governing body or responsible head of any penal or charitable institution supported wholly or in part by the State of North Carolina, is hereby authorized and directed to have the necessary operation for asexualization or sterilization*

*performed upon any mentally defective or feeble-minded inmate of patient thereof.”*

But the process had to be in the best interest of the individual and for the common good of society. 77% of all people sterilized in North Carolina were women. North Carolina performed this from 1929-1947 on mostly females under the age of twenty. Physicians in North Carolina didn’t leave any sideline for inaccuracy. Many women were brought in under the idea that they might have been displaying behaviors that were sexual in nature and consequently increasing the possibility of sexual promiscuity and meriting eugenic sterilization. Young children were also targeted by these relentless practices. A teenage girl from North Carolina was the entity of her father’s actions. She was given a physical and the doctor realized that she had sexual intercourse. As a consequence, her parents gave consent to have their daughter sterilized (as they pretended she was promiscuous) instead of confessing that the father was the attacker.

Written by reporter and investigator Haden Mikesell, MFEC, Nebraska 2011

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

[](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=janice+black&um=1&hl=en&safe=active&sa=N&rlz=1T4SKPT_enUS447US447&biw=1366&bih=556&tbm=isch&tbnid=6QYCjlKmjMk05M:&imgrefurl=http://saynsumthn.wordpress.com/tag/wallace-kuralt/&docid=IHVVZopBClr0CM&imgurl=http://saynsumthn.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/janiceblack90341.jpg&w=404&h=227&ei=1BnYTu_uHYuCsgLn0YjMDQ&zoom=1)

**A Closer Look: Janice Black**

It was 1971 when 18 year old Janice Black nervously and confusingly printed her signature (since it was the only thing she knew how to write) on a non-labeled consent form at the doctor’s office. Her estimated mental age/capacity was similar to a seven year old and her IQ resides at 44. Her parents came to the decision that she was not fit to raise children since they would probably reflect similarly poor intelligence. The next morning, her step-mother drove her to Charlotte Memorial Hospital, not explaining why. The next thing Janice remembers is waking up in a hospital bed, writhing in pain as she tried to get up. She looked down and saw a long incision, stretching from her belly button down. She didn’t know it yet, but the state of North Carolina took away her God-given ability to reproduce. From 1929-1974, over 7,600 people were sterilized, all without an understanding of consent; just a shaky signature on an unknown document. Not one of them knew their gift to have a family would be taken away unethically. Now, state officials are in an effort to compensate people who were sufferers, in the idea that the procedures were actually medically unnecessary, irrational and morally wrong. Looking back on documents, they only found but 41 names, Janice Black being one of the few. The case history stated from her family members that they could not always watch over her, and also stated that she ran off with a truck driver and possibly had sex. Janice says she “doesn’t know where those stories came from. I never ran off in a truck with anyone. I’ve never been with a man.” The psychological report from the case history says that she had a rather amazing “way with language,” but the report ended in determining that she was an “exploited individual.” This shows how the law can twist the truth in order to get [](http://www.google.com/imgres?q=janice+black&um=1&hl=en&safe=active&sa=N&rlz=1T4SKPT_enUS447US447&biw=1366&bih=556&tbm=isch&tbnid=csfSsI8XQGZuBM:&imgrefurl=http://swashzone.blogspot.com/2011/11/whos-reproduction-boss.html&docid=3r4OEtxRnZiQZM&imgurl=http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-9sW22GFuc6w/Tr06MuTGeYI/AAAAAAAAAsU/MHEREnbrz7Y/s1600/Janice+Black.jpg&w=316&h=209&ei=tyLYTpKJEfGIsALSlbzKDQ&zoom=1)their way.

“Sometimes I wish I hadn’t been born, you know what I’m saying? Sometimes I - what I feel like – that I wasn’t treated fairly. Like I was a human being. Like I was **no** human being.”

She is 59 years old now, with nothing to show but an ugly scar and an even uglier memory. Living in a house off The Plaza, with Sadie Gilmore Long, her long-time friend and legal guardian, she lives happily singing in her church choir and working three days a week as an active and giving citizen of a country that took her most prized possession away. The passage of the 1929 sterilization law made the state of North Carolina the 17th state out of 33, including Nebraska, Michigan, Indiana, Delaware and Florida, to pass a sterilization law.  It remained in place until 1973, when the last recorded sterilizations were performed on April 4, 2003, when the Senate voted secretly to overturn the horrible law that ruined lives for 74 years.

Written by reporter and investigator Haden Mikesell, MFEC, Nebraska 2011